

The Heirs of Ishmael

• [516] six men of his bodyguard. They rested on their rugs,
619 Bedouin-fashion, on crossed legs. Beside them was a heap
728 of dead ashes and the three soot-blackened stones on
577 which last night the cook-pots had stood. A brass brazier
shed a little warmth, comforting in the chill of the
morning. Ibn Meheyd sat holding the wide sleeves of
his cloak over it.

572 He stood up at our approach and, when I had dis-
mounted, he came up to me and put his arm paternally
round my shoulders. "My son," said he pleasantly, "dost
thou see that Ibn Meheyd has been true to his promise?"

His eyes said more than the few words. I seized his
right hand and pressed it gratefully in both my hands.
"May God grant thee all thou wishest!" I said in fare-
well.

"Come to visit me this summer," he called after me,
"and pitch thy tent with the Fid'an. Thou art indeed a
Rueyli, but we count thee also as one of us. God be
with thee wherever thou goest!"

342 being for the women, *maḥ'ad al-ḥarim*, the left-hand one for
 592 the men, *maḥ'ad ar-reḡāl* (or *rab'a*). The partition with a
 283 hole through which the women are fond of peeping at the
 guests is called *sāḥa masḡūḡa* (or *kāṭe'a masḡūḡa*). The ropes
 known as *aṭnāb* as well as those called *mkūt* (pl., *muḡt*) are
 of hemp. If such a rope is thin it is called *maras*. *Habl* (pl.,
ḥbā') is the name given by the Rwala only to the ropes which
 they themselves make of camel's hair.

FURNISHINGS OF THE MEN'S COMPARTMENT; THE FIREPLACE

352 When the tent has thus been firmly set up, they carry into
 286 it the whole equipment, *helle*. "Place the furnishings, *eṣḥkū
 al-helle*," orders the owner. In the men's compartment the
 ground in front of the dividing wall is covered with a carpet,
 either bought, *kaṭīfa*, or else made by the Rwala women,
ma'aneḡa, upon which are laid quilts, stitched and filled with
 cotton, *farše* (pl., *frāš*), either of the European pattern, *leḡef*,
 or of an Oriental pattern, *ṭarrāḡa*. Upon these are placed pillows,
 one meter long and 30 centimeters broad, filled with wool or
 camel's hair and sometimes also covered over with a broad
 woollen shawl, *šāf*. A pillow is often replaced by a camel's
 saddle, against which it is easier to rest.

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 [291] The master of the tent and his guests remove their shoes
 or boots, which they place behind them against the dividing
 wall, while they hang their rifles on the main pole in the
 women's compartment and sit down on the carpets, drawing
 their legs in upon it. A man when thus seated usually sup-
 ports his side, *murtāci*, or back, *mutasanned*, on the pillow
 or saddle. When a man is narrating a story, he sits on his
 crossed legs, *mutarabbe'*. During a meal he kneels on his left
 knee and sits on his left heel, *kā'ed 'ala rkubeh w-nuss*; while
 inspecting anything or testing a weapon, he kneels on both
 knees and sits on his heels, *bāreṣ 'ala rkubeh*; when he washes
 his hands, he squats, *meṣ'i*; if he sits down with his arms
 round his knees, he is referred to as *muṣaḡḡef*. When it is
 hot, he lies down on his stomach, *mumbasḡaḡ*; when he takes
 a nap, *jesṣṣe'* (or *jinsid*), he turns over on his back, *muṣa-
 salfi 'ala paḡareḡ*, or lies down with his face resting on his
 hands, *mu'annes*, or turns over on his side, lays his hand under
 his face, and goes to sleep, *nājem mingeda'*.

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He said: "Enter and nothing fear,
While on my shoulders my head remains."

The women and girls praise Nawwâf and his spouse Mešâ'el, daughter of Sattâm and Turkijje.

[516] *Ma'nakijje* is considered one of the best breeds of horses. The good news that a *ma'nakijje* mare has been bought signifies Nawwâf's wedding with the daughter of the late Prince Sattâm — that is, with the offspring of the best family. When entering a litter the woman must bend and involuntarily show the calves of her legs. *Darârîġ* (sing., *darrâġe*) are spindles wound full with thread. *Al-ĥanijje* signifies a litter of the *ġetab* variety, with long curved poles. Mešâ'el may sit tranquilly in her litter. Nawwâf will repulse any hostile attack threatening the women during the march.

*Wa'-šûf ġebâl aš-šatt
bujûten tbanna
nawwâf ġâ mešâġ
nabri waġanna.*

Ah, before the Euphrates I see
The pitching of tents.
O Nawwâf, thou appeaser of sorrow!
We long for our country.

A few Kwâġbe kins revolted against Prince an-Nûri, left the Rwala, and encamped with the 'Amârât on the Euphrates. Their women and girls sent word to Nawwâf to intercede for them with the prince, his father, in order that they might return home.

Waġan, territory, is used but seldom; the common expression is *dira*.

*Tasammâ'â ġâ-ĥla-t-ġejl
flân ġejjurwei ġebâbeh
mâ ġâl ġajj 'ala-t-ġejl
aġ-farâ ħillen ġehâbeh.*

Hear ye, O riders!
So and So, may Allâh prolong his youth!
As long as he shall live and ride horses,
Any herd will be afraid of him.

HOSPITALITY

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12. Oh, how many fat wethers' heads have we thrown away 539^x
 And besmeared the necks of she-camels from the wound 574
 made by the knife.
13. A pure heart seeks no gossip,
 And should those heroes refuse to salute me (I shall
 salute them).
14. For both the chief and the herdsman should walk the
 path of love,
 As Allāh keeps the account of each being.
15. A guest is Allāh's guest and must not be insulted,
 And this one we shall protect against wrong.

The composer of this poem, Dřejjem az-Zulmāwi, lived in the settlement of Kna' and was famous for his hospitality. Whoever traveled from Hājel to Damascus or from Syria to the Šammar or Kušmān territory stopped with him. Once, in a cold and rainy night, a band returning from a raid reached his abode and knocked on the door of his mud hut. He instantly awakened his servant and ordered him to prepare supper for the guests, many of whom had not before even saluted him. The reciter was Fhejd, a camel herdman, native of Kna'.

Verse 4. When pounding coffee, the pestle is first beaten [272] against the center of the mortar on the coffee beans, then on its brim, and is tapped two or three times to shake off the coffee sticking to the pestle and the brim; this sound is much like the deep howl of the wolf. 6. Masbā' is a man afraid to go out on a raid, preferring to stay at home near his wife. Glebbā is a woman who has not married for love but has been bought by her husband. She cannot run away from him because her kinsfolk would have to return what they got for her, and the husband will not divorce her, hating to lose what she has cost him. She shows dissatisfaction by everlasting opposition and quarreling, especially when she finds her husband to be a coward. Takā 'apjehom is the tapping with sticks on the she-camels' necks to make them kneel on the ground before a tent or house, where the riders are to be guests. 7. It is for the guests that fresh coffee is made, whereas the other visitors who were attracted by the beating of the pestle in the mortar must be content with yesterday's warmed-up coffee. A sabbā is a dark low cloud, [272] through which the rider has to pass, inhaling its moist smell 132 516.

- 132 the while. The *sahāba* is always followed by rain. 8. *Nisriyye* is a dry, icy wind of high velocity, a gale. When caught in it, the rider places his right hand in his left and his left hand in his right sleeve, pressing them to his breast to keep his cloak from being opened by the wind and urging his animal on with heels only. 9. He sits in the same posture when a heavy rain, accompanied by a piercing wind, beats against his face. *Nisnās* is a light, moist wind which cuts the face and penetrates the clothes to the bones. 10. *Mutia al-'alābi* is one who, disliking to bend his neck or to salute, is full of conceit. *At-ṭine* or *bejt at-ṭine* is a hut built of large unbaked bricks. 11. *Šahālil* are the single date-covered twigs of the date bunch, called *ḡenw*. The settlement of Gubba lies north-northwest of Kna' in the Nefūd. 12. The host paints on both sides of the necks of the she-camels belonging to his guests a thick line with the blood of the animal which he has killed for them. Men seeing these marks ask the host's name, and thus his praise extends to all parts. The head of an animal is never set before the guests but given to the poor.
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